

and the general opinion seems to be that it has a definite curative action on the disease.

Various drugs like acriflavine and mercurochrome have been used in cases of septicæmia, and occasional miraculous cures reported, but it is doubtful whether these have not been examples of *post hoc propter hoc*. We seem to be making progress, however, and although we have not as yet attained Ehrlich's ideal—*therapia sterilisans magna*, more and more potent remedies are being produced. As yet we have no knowledge of how these internal antiseptics really act, and when we once begin to discover this mechanism we may expect much more rapid advance. The first streaks of dawn will have begun to shine in the darkness through which we now grope.

Although a great deal has been done in attempts to solve certain questions, the answers have not yet been given; for example, the composition of insulin and other endocrine secretions, and of some of the vitamins and how they may be produced synthetically. In problems of this kind the solution often evades one, and endless work is done finding out little odds and ends. Ultimately some one makes a lucky discovery and releases a flood of light. In the growth of every science there are periods, sometimes very long periods, when there is no forward movement. Then comes suddenly a discovery opening up a new point of view, followed, it may be, by an advance which completely changes existing beliefs, and progress becomes the order of the day, each step forward paving the way for yet another. One such discovery which stands out as a landmark is Wöhler's production of urea—an organic substance from inorganic material. This epoch-making discovery did away with the prevalent belief in the existence of a vital force as a necessity for the production of substances which enter into the structure of living organisms. This was the beginning. Synthesis has gone steadily forward, and the chemical structures of organic substances of the greatest complexity have been made clear, though many still remain to be revealed. But the mysterious so-called vital force has been eliminated, and there seems to be no obstacle to the ultimate discovery of the chemical structure of any and every organic substance that plays a part in the process of life. In this way it may be possible one day to answer the question of what life really is. The outworks of that problem have already been reached.

Life is like a star. At first sight a star is just a curious fact. Then by means of the telescope we discover that it is a body with inequalities and irregularities of surface—its physical features; later by the spectroscope we determine the different elements composing it; by mathematical calculations we answer many abstruse questions regarding it. Ultimately we may find out what it really is.

THE ULSTER MEDICAL SOCIETY

THE first meeting of the session was held in the Whitla Medical Institute on Thursday, 18th October, 1934. The outgoing president, Professor W. J. Wilson, installed Dr. S. R. Hunter as president for 1934-5. Dr. Hunter, before delivering his presi-

dential address (published elsewhere in this number of the Journal), thanked Professor Wilson for the capable and dignified manner in which he had filled the chair during the last session. "We owe him," he said, "our best thanks also for his generous hospitality on various occasions here and at Donaghadee, where many of us spent a most enjoyable day. I am sure you will allow me to include in our thanks Mrs. Wilson and the members of their musical family, who helped to make his 'At Home' such a wonderful success. It gives me the greatest possible pleasure to propose this vote of thanks."

Dr. Hunter then referred in the following terms to the loss the Society had sustained during the past session in the deaths of four of its Fellows.

On 11th December, 1933, this Society lost one of its most distinguished as well as one of its warmest supporters by the lamented death of Sir William Whitla. It was due to his great kindness and bountiful generosity that this building was erected, equipped, and presented to the Ulster Medical Society for its permanent home, and by his last wish he made it possible for this Society to reside here practically rent free. To mark their appreciation of these great gifts, your Council decided to honour and perpetuate his memory by calling this handsome building the "Whitla Medical Institute." In addition to these deeds of generous benefaction, Sir William will always be remembered as the author of two books which made his name famous in medical circles throughout the world. Edition after edition of his "Materia Medica" and his "Dictionary of Treatment" were printed, as they seemed to fill a long-felt want among practitioners, medical students, and dispensing chemists. His third medical book was a "Dictionary of Medicine," in two volumes, a copy of which he presented to every member who attended the B.M.A. meeting held in Belfast in 1909, of which he was that year the worthy president. To the older members Sir William was a remarkable and fascinating personality. Many will readily remember his distinguished professional appearance as he drove through the streets of the city in an open victoria, behind a pair of high-stepping, fast-trotting bays, wearing a silk hat and a startling red tie. As long as his health permitted he was a regular attender at our meetings, an active member in its deliberations, and was remarkable for his wisdom and shrewdness. Twice he was honoured by being elected president, first in 1886-7 and again in 1901-2, and he was also made an Honorary Fellow. Sir William was really a great man of wonderful vision, who never did anything mean, or ever looked for praise or renown. As is well known, he was deeply religious, and took the keenest interest in and was a generous supporter of many philanthropic movements. Widely travelled and highly cultured, he was a charming companion to his intimate friends. His ability as a clinical teacher and his wide knowledge of all the latest methods of medical treatment made him a worthy successor to the famous James Cuming, the distinguished professor and teacher of clinical medicine in the old Royal Hospital. In conclusion, to quote from the words of an old friend of his—"a great man," a very great man has gone to his long rest, a rest for which he earnestly desired, and for which he patiently waited. William Whitla has not lived in vain.

The news of the death of Andrew Fullerton on the 22nd May of this year was

received with deep regret and sorrow, and filled all our hearts with the sense of irreparable loss. His death deprived this Society of one who was a regular attender at its meetings, who took the keenest interest in its management and was always ready to take part with kindly criticism on any subject in debate. A member since 1896, he filled the office of president in 1919-20. Ten years later he delivered the fourth Campbell Oration, taking as his subject, "The Progress of Urology," a line of research and work which had won for him an international reputation.

Andrew Fullerton had a most persevering spirit, which enabled him to overcome the uphill work of his earlier career and in his later years to surmount his indifferent health.

For thirty years he held appointments on the surgical staffs of the Belfast Hospital for Sick Children and the Royal Victoria Hospital, serving these institutions with unwearying energy and skill, gaining for himself the affection of his colleagues and the unshakeable confidence of all who knew him. In spite of large private and hospital practice he found time to write some seventy-seven papers on the surgery of the urinary tract. His brilliant work on this subject made his name famous, and numerous distinctions were conferred on him. In 1922 he was elected an Honorary Fellow of the American College of Surgeons. In 1924 he succeeded Professor Sinclair in the Chair of Surgery in Queen's University, but perhaps none gave him greater pleasure than his election as president of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, being the first surgeon resident outside Dublin to hold this office, and in the following year he was re-elected. In 1915 he was invited to become a consulting surgeon to the British Expeditionary Force in France, with the rank of Colonel, and his record of service there not only confirmed the wisdom of this appointment, but brought a wider recognition of the Belfast School of Surgery. For his valuable service he was rewarded with the C.M.G. and the C.B., and was three times mentioned in despatches. His energy and his enthusiasm seemed to have endowed him with perpetual youth. His inherent simplicity and honesty rendered him incapable of guile. He had the gift of making friends, and with him friendship was lifelong. He was a keen golfer, and we were all delighted when the Royal County Down Club elected him captain last year. Very seldom was he absent from the annual golfing meeting of this Society. We shall certainly miss his cheery word and his winning personality, and it is no exaggeration to say that his name and work will long be remembered by his patients, students, and colleagues alike.

It was with surprise and regret that we learned of the death of Doctor John A. Milroy, the Professor of Biochemistry at Queen's University. A highly distinguished graduate of Edinburgh University, he came to Belfast in 1902 as lecturer of physiology; he then joined this Society and attended many of our meetings, taking a keen interest in its discussions. We were accustomed to hear him expounding his views rather shyly, it is true, but with a quiet assurance that won our heartiest admiration. Of a kindly and unassuming nature, he was held in the highest esteem and affection by all with whom he came in contact. His valuable scientific contributions to the various journals of biochemistry and of physiology were distinguished by the extreme care and accuracy with which they were written. His death leaves

a vacancy at Queen's and in scientific circles which will be difficult to fill, and this Society has lost a good friend whose modesty and charm will always remain a pleasing memory.

The death of Doctor James Hunter Gillespie as a result of a motor accident in England on the 25th February, 1934, removed from our membership a young man who, if he had been spared to have specialized in radiology in this city, as had been his intention, would no doubt have won fame and renown for his medical school. The son of a much esteemed Fellow of this Society, he received his early education at Campbell College, where he first showed that interest in electrical subjects which finally led him to choose radiology as a career. At Queen's University he proved himself a very brilliant student, winning many prizes and scholarships, and graduating with honours in 1930. Later, in 1933, he was awarded his B.Sc. with honours and his M.D. with gold medal for a thesis, much of the work for which had been carried out with the electrocardiograph and the Matthews oscillograph. He was working for his D.M.R.E. in London when the fatal accident occurred, and there is no doubt but that the promise of a brilliant future which his student days presaged would have been amply fulfilled.

To the relatives of these deceased members we tender our respectful sympathy.

The second meeting of the session was held on 1st November in the Whitla Medical Institute, Dr. S. R. Hunter, the president, in the chair. Dr. Eileen M. Hickey read a paper on "Medical and Surgical Practice in Belfast Fifty Years Ago." This paper is published elsewhere in this number of the Journal. A discussion was then raised on the question of inaugurating a Tuberculosis sub-section of the Society. This was proposed by Dr. Brooke, and seconded by Dr. Gillespie. The secretary, Dr. Montgomery, stated that the Council was ready to accept the sub-section if the members of the Society decided on its formation. A lively discussion ensued, in which Doctors McCollum, McNabb, Boyd Campbell, and Kean supported the motion, and Professor W. J. Wilson with Doctors Allen, Montgomery, and Clearkin in opposition. Several other members took part in the discussion, but it was not clear from their remarks whether they supported the motion or were in opposition to it. The motion was finally put to the Society and meeting, and it was rejected by a large majority.

The third meeting of the session was held on 15th November, with the president, Dr. S. R. Hunter, in the chair. Six short papers were read by Dr. S. B. Boyd Campbell, Mr. G. R. B. Purce and Dr. B. R. Clarke, Dr. J. T. Lewis, Dr. R. Marshall, Mr. J. S. Loughridge, and Dr. F. P. Montgomery. These papers appear elsewhere in this number of the Journal.

The fourth meeting of the session was held in the Whitla Medical Institute on 22nd November, the president, Dr. S. R. Hunter, in the chair. Professor J. Preston Maxwell, M.D., F.R.C.S.Eng., of the Union Medical College, Peking, addressed the Society on the subject, "Thirty-Five Years' Medical Work in China." The thanks of the Society were expressed to Professor Maxwell by several members.

H. HILTON STEWART,
Hon. Editorial Secretary.

18 Malone Road, Belfast.

BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION TYRONE DIVISION

A MEETING of the Tyrone Division, British Medical Association, was held in the Tyrone County Hospital, Omagh, on Thursday, 6th December, at 4.30 p.m.

Those present were : Doctors Leary (chairman), Eaton, Lagan, W. Lyle, L. A. Lyle, Gillespie, Murnaghan, Warnock, Chambers, Collins, Johnston, Ekin, O'Brian, and Martin (hon. secretary).

Dr. Eaton proposed that it be recorded in our minutes the high appreciation which the members of the medical profession, especially those of the Tyrone Division, held of our past chairman, the late Dr. McAllister, who took such an active part in our Divisional meetings. Dr. Murnaghan supported this, and it was passed in silence, all members standing.

Dr. Eaton proposed, and Dr. Murnaghan seconded, that Dr. W. Lyle be appointed our representative on the Representative Body.—Passed.

Dr. Eaton proposed, and Dr. Murnaghan seconded, that Dr. Leary be appointed our representative (deputy) on the Representative Body.—Passed.

The secretary was instructed to write the Fermanagh Division, and ask them to appoint a deputy representative on the Representative Body and notify head office of same.

Dr. Leary, on behalf of the Tyrone Division, extended a welcome to the two new members—Dr. Ekin and Dr. O'Brian.

Dr. Gillespie proposed, Dr. Martin seconded, and the motion was passed :—
“That the following resolution be sent to the Ministry of Home Affairs : ‘That a preparation of ipecachuana, preferably the tincture, be placed on the prescribed list of medicines.’ ”

Dr. Martin suggested that we hold four meetings during the coming year, and that each member be sent a fixture card. After some discussion the following dates of meetings were agreed upon :—

(1) 24th January, 1935, in Tyrone County Hospital, at 4.30 p.m. :

Special Lecture on Gynæcology by Dr. C. H. G. Macafee.

(2) 21st March, 1935, in Tyrone County Hospital, at 4.30 p.m. :

Annual General Meeting ; Election of Office-bearers.

(3) 30th May, 1935, in the Tyrone and Fermanagh Mental Hospital, at 4.30 p.m.

(4) 18th October, 1935, in Tyrone County Hospital, at 4.30 p.m. :

Special Lecture on Common Bone Diseases by Ian Fraser, F.R.C.S. Eng.

Dr. Gillespie proposed and Dr. Warnock seconded the following resolution :—
“That we, the Tyrone Division of the B.M.A., call again the attention of the Council of the Belfast Branch to the very inadequate fee for certifying persons of unsound mind, and to the fact that no fee can be paid if the doctor cannot satisfy himself that the patient is certifiable.” The secretary was instructed to forward a copy of the above resolution to the Branch Council.

J. M. MARTIN,

Hon. Secretary.

Holmedene, Clougher, Co. Tyrone.

LISBURN AND DISTRICT MEDICAL GUILD

THE last meeting of the Guild was held at Dr. Boyd's of Hillsborough, who kindly provided tea for the members. After the minutes had been read and signed, Mr. Macafee of Belfast was introduced to read a paper entitled "Acute Abdominal Conditions in the Female." This paper was of a purely clinical nature, and many useful points were brought forward in the differential diagnosis of such common conditions as ruptured ectopia, pregnancy, acute appendicitis, acute salpingitis, as well as uterine infections, and ovarian cysts and uterine fibroids which had undergone torsion.

A vote of thanks was proposed by Dr. W. M. Hunter, and seconded by Dr. Colquhoun, to Mr. Macafee for an extremely interesting and valuable paper.

Railway Street, Lisburn.

J. W. PEATT,
Hon. Secretary.

BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION NORTH-EAST ULSTER DIVISION

THE Division met in the Café, Coleraine, on Friday, 12th October. There was a fair attendance, and Dr. Hunter entertained the members to tea before the meeting.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and passed. The chairman, Dr. Allison (Coleraine), then gave his address on "Some Observations on Medical Practice." He dealt with the relationship which should exist between doctor and patient and between members of the profession. Dr. Allison gave much sound advice on the conduct of medical practice, and related many interesting and amusing incidents which had happened during his long experience.

Dr. Bateman proposed and Dr. Gordon seconded a vote of thanks to Dr. Allison for his most interesting and helpful paper.

The usual silver collection for medical charities was taken.

At the meeting on Friday, 16th November, the main business was a paper by Mr. G. D. F. McFadden on "Modern Methods in the Treatment of Fractures." We hope to publish this paper in our next issue.

36 Eglinton Terrace, Portrush.

J. M. HUNTER,
Hon. Secretary.